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In the Paisley Magazine is an article on the Rev. William Livingstone, minister of Lanark, in which this chap book is mentioned.

WH.

THE CONFLICT IN CONSCIENCE OF A *DEAR CHRISTIAN*,

Named,

Bessie Clerkson,

In the Parish of *LANERK*, which she lay under, three years and an half.

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EDINBURGH,
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The Conflict in Conscience of a dear Christian, named, Bessie Clarkson, *in the Parish of* Lanerk, *which she lay under, three years and an half.*

MINISTER.

BESSIE, *how are you?*

Bessie.

I find the wrath of an angry God, of a crabbed God: and all the wrath that you preached, is come on me now: I find him daily coming against me.

Min. 'Bessie', God will for good ends let his

own dear children taſte of his anger , a
wreſtle with his wrath in this world, that t
be not caſten up in a dead ſleep of fleſhly ſe
rity ; and ſo periſh with the wicked of
world, in that great wrath that is to be reve
ed, and to bring them to a hatred of ſin and
row for it: and to teach them how far they
oblidged to the Son of God, who hath for th
undergone the full weight of that wrath , (
your trouble is but a ſpark of that fire whe
with Chriſt was burnt up in a ſacrifice to
Father) and that your heart being racked w
terrour, we may be made for the greater pe
and the calm after the tempeſt may be
ſweeter when it comes; and Gods glory
greater, and more manifeſt in that dealing,
caſting down,and plunging in the hell, and
ving again to the heavens, and this ſort of d
ing drives atheiſm beſt out of the heart.

Beſ. I am not a Devil to contemn God , a
I cannot get faith to believe in God.

Min. It is a degree of faith, to find the w
of faith, it is a ſtep of greater growth.

When I was about to comfort her, ſhe ſa
will ye ſpeak to me as ye ſhould, and ſay, T
wretched, ſinful and wicked woman , and
tell me ſweet words.

I anſwered her, No *Beſſie*, I muſt not m
ſure you as ye do your ſelf, by your own ſen

but to teach you to hope above hope ; and say with *Job*, *Lord, if thou wilt slay me, I will trust in thee.*

Bes. O there was grace there, but there is a great dissension betwixt God and me, I am cast away : O that this wakening had come twenty years since! but now my time is lost; many comes to Word and Sacrament, that knows not what they are doing; the morn when Gods people come to hear you, I cannot come, I am cast aside.

Min. It is yet the acceptable time wherein the Lord may be found, he is yet upon the throne of grace : give no place to such suggestions of Sathan, and distrustful cogitations, arising off your corruption ; and where you cannot come to the Word, that is not to be laid to your charge, it is not an Argument of Gods Anger, when one by sickness or trouble is withholden, who would fain be there: but seek you by prayer to God, who by his Spirit will teach you inwardly, and supply the want of the means by an inward working.

When I pressed to perswade her that GOD in his own time would ease her, I cannot find what said she.

Min. Albeit ye feel it not, pray, that the Lord would *remembir mercy in wrath*, as the Prophet *Hab.* 3. 2. Mercy in wrath, said she, O that is strange word! O for absolution! O for a drop

to cool my tormented ſoul! O that I could wi
a ſtep nearer him.

Min. [Bleſſed are they that hunger and
thirſt, for they ſhall be ſatisfied.] It is the
Lord who is our ſufficiency, who works the
will and the deed, it is he who wakens thoſe
deſires in you, and he will work the work.

When I had ſaid, the Lord dealt with her a
he doth, to humble her: To humble me, ſaid
ſhe, and that I am; that Cat that ſits there is
in a better caſe than I am: I ſhall beat dow
this carcaſe with Beir-bread and water, but tha
doth not the turn. When her ſervant woma
ſaid you are a good body, and began to com
mend her.

Ceaſe, ſaid ſhe, I am but a Dog, and wor
nor a Dog, Gods wrath is on me, For my in
viſible ſins, and if I were away, there woul
be none but Chriſtians on the Earth: I kno
Chriſt would go betwixt me and all my ſin
but one, I will not lain it, nor hide it, it
deſpair.

Min. You are very ſenſible of your unbelief
and God will make you alſo ſenſible of a livel
faith, or all be done; [For a little while hat
he forſaken you as he ſaith, Iſaiah 54. 7, 8,
9, 10. but with great compaſſion will he ga
ther you: for a moment, in his anger, hat
he hid his face from you for a little ſeaſon, bu
with everlaſting mercy will he have compaſſi-

on you, *Ibid.* 10. 11. O thou afflicted and tossed with tempest.]

Bes. Is it God that doth this to me? Can God spoyl himself? I had Faith and Prayer, now they are reft, couped, and spoyled: Can God do it? will God rob himself? will he take away the matter of his own glory; I am ashamed to look any man in the face: I have lost the favour of God and man. O for a drop of grace! O for *as much faith as a grain of mustard seed*!

Min. It is the Lord who deals with you, but not to rob your faith, which is his gift, and once given, cometh never under provocation: Yet it continueth not ay in a like vigour and strength, but will oft come under a great Eclypse, and be brangled with doubtings, and shaken with fears; for there is no perfection here, and all this exercise is to add strength, that ye wrestling with God as *Jacob* did, may prevail in end: and that is not lost, your earnest desire evidently declareth. And when I shew her that we walked by faith and not by feeling, and must not measure our selves, nor Gods goodness and love by our sense. She answereth, If faith do it not, I have done with it. When one beside spake to her of Gods favour, and presence, she said, God, if I were as sure of it, as you are; I have feet (said she) hands, eyes, knees, I can do any thing but one, I cannot believe; well were the soul

whatever it was ordained, that had faith: the great want of Faith and Love to God these days, it was never lesse, and they will find one day what it is to want it: one thing holds me from God, it is unbelief. Gods hand is sore on me; I would fain believe, Pray, pray, pray, said she, ye that have faith.

Min. The Lord [who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax,] will bring your desire, and these weak beginnings to a greater growth and perfection: For faith groweth by degrees, as that blind mans sight *Mark* 8. 24, 25.

When I told her of Gods dealing with his own by diverse sorts of trouble in mind, body and estate, she answereth, no trouble to this trouble in mind. I care not, said she, for legs, arms, eyes, and all the rest, if I could get comfort in the Bloud of Jesus: I would not care if my carcase lay lame, leper, sick, sore, so that my mind were pacified, and at one with God; I care not for all Satans assaults, if he were even standing there, so that I could find God with me, and not against me.

Wait on, said I, the Lord will come. She answereth, he cometh dayly in wrath. But he will come in mercy, said I, in his own time. She answereth, ever since this bred in me, you say that, but I can never find it; would *I* willingly lose my soul, if I could get faith? well is the soul that

that it was ever ordained of God, that gets the comfort of the holy Ghost.

Min. *Would ye not*, Beſſie, *be one of his*? Wally, wally, ſaid ſhe, to be one of his, to have one drop of Grace from his Finger end, who would not be one of his?

Then ſaid I, bleſſed are ye, *For bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt for Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be ſatisfied.* Bleſſed are they that ſeek in ſincerity, to be one of that ſociety of the Saints of God, to have the comforts of that communion and priviledge of his people, for *bleſſed*, Pſ. 33. 12. *are theſe people whoſe God is the* Lord, *even the people whom he hath choſen for his own inheritance.* And after I had prayed for her, and preſſed by ſome paſſages of Scripture, to comfort her, ſhe ſaid, it is heavy to my heart to hear thoſe ſweet admonitions and prayers, and to get no part of them in my ſoul, and not to find him whom you ſeek.

She ſayeth again, whether ſhall *I* turn? whether ſhall I go? what ſhall I do? whether ſhall *I* run to ſeek God, to grip him? I cannot get grips faſtened on him. Dear Miniſter, ſaid ſhe, tell me what ſin hath procured this, that *I* am ſuch a ſpectacle to the world by all others: Heard you, read you, knew ye ever one like me? Then I ſhew her of *Job*, *Jeremiah*, *David*, *Hezekiah* and others. And albeit, *Beſſie*, to your feel-

feeling, ye cannot get grips faſtned on him, yet aſſuredly he hath grips faſtned on you, the good ſheepherd hath you in his hand, and none ſhall pluck you out of it.

Beſſ. I think if ever I had had faith, I could not have loſt it. I anſwered, you have not loſt it: your deſire, which God reputes for faith, and hath the ſame promiſe of ſatisfaction which Faith hath made unto it. Se anſwereth, I would be burnt quick to be ſure of ſalvation: I live without faith, I live and worſhip not God, I can find no comfort from God nor man; my life is miſerable and comfortleſs.

Min: *That is even Jobs complaint, ſaid* I, Job 3. 20, 21. *So albeit ye be comfortleſs to your ſenſe yet you are not marrowleſs, and hath the Saints ſubject to the ſame tentation and tribulation with you: and ye ſhall get in the Lords mercy a bleſſed out gate with them: yea, although we be never witneſſ to it, yet ye your ſelf ſhall feel it.*

Beſ. I am the moſt miſerable and wretched creature in the world, for my ſins are hid to my ſelf, and known to God.

Min. Beſſie, *God is not ay purſuing ſin, when the ſouls of his Saints are perplexed and purſued with horrours:* He ſeeth no iniquity in Jacob nor ſin in Iſrael; *albeit it ſitteth us to ſeek them out, and to ſorrow for them: he hath other ends where-*

herefore he dealeth with his own, namely, that he ay ſhew his work, and glorifie his Name, as Chriſt ſaith of that blind man, Joh. 9. 3.

After I had prayed, ſaid ſhe, if your prayers ave a good ground, and be according to Gods ill it is the better, it will be the better heard: ut that it is ſaid, I have a warrand to mourn ith them that mourn; and to pity and pray or all that are in trouble, chiefly of my own lock. Your warrand were the better, ſaid ſhe, f I were one of Chriſts flock: happy were that oul that were one of thoſe. But ye are one of hoſe, ſaid I. Ye have ay ſaid that, ſaid ſhe, but can never find it. You will find it, ſaid I, in he Lords time: tarry his leiſure, it will come ith comfort. Tarry muſt *I*, ſaid ſhe, where hal I flee or flit? he cometh ay in due time, ut he cometh to me in wrath. When I remem-ired her again of *Job*, who ſaid, *If thou wilt ſlay me I will believe in thee.* She anſwereth, where will ye get the like of *Job*? No, not amongſt you ll that are Miniſters: faithful was he, but I have one, no ſalvation for me. Then to try her, I aid, will you ſell me your part of it, your tittle, ight and kindneſs; what ſhall I give you for it, f ye have none, you may the better cheap quite t; and I will give you for it. She anſwereth, Why ſcorn you me, a ſilly poor woman, and e a wiſe man, I would buy and not ſell, if I had ten thouſand millions of Gold, if I had a thou-

thouſand worlds , if it were to be bought
mony, I would give you all for it.

Min. *I ſaid not this to ſcorn you* Beſſie, *b*
draw out your deſire by this demand as it d
whereby it is eaſie to diſcern that ye have a
title to that ſalvation , although it ſeem ti
your ſenſe.

Beſſie , I have no pleaſure in any thing ,
ther in Husband nor child , I can do not
but ſin ; my life is all ſin, and it were to
the bark of a Cail Caſtuck and eat, I ſin in
doing of it, why live I then? I cannot die,
ſhe , I cannot live , they bury a carcaſe ,
they bury me , a carcaſe of ſin , yea , ſi
ſelf.

When I ſpeared at her, if ſhe deſired m
cy, ſhe anſwered , O! that his deſire to
were as great as mine to him! O for a loo
love! Cry and pray , ſaid I, for the Lord h
ſaid, [Seek and ye ſhall find, knock and it
be opened unto you.] My prayer, ſaid ſhe
repelled : my cry is not reſpected: it doth
good, I cannot have faith, except God give
none hath any grace but from him; happy
they they that can bleſs him, and call upon
Name.

Min. *And happy are they* Beſſie, *that counts th*
happy , and would with all their heart be of t
number as ye would.

Beſſ

Bessie, That stone in the wall hath as great appetite to any bodily comfort of meat, drink, cloaths, or such like, as I have, for *I* cannot get the comforts of the holy Spirit.

When I prayed for that consolation to her, that solid comfort which is stronger nor tentation, tribulation, or death it self; she said, why lare ye your prayers on such a vile wretch? God hath counted the number, and gathered them, and I am one moe, I will not believe you. said I, *Bessie*, albeit ye believe the suggestions of Satan in your false heart, it is otherwise in the account of God, and I will pray for you, that it may be revealed to you, and pray ye with me. and after I had prayed, she said, Sayings will not do it, you do your part, but if God work not, and he give it not, I cannot have comfort. Can ye have grace till God give it? Can that stone believe? Yes, *Bessie*, said I, let us use the means, and do according to Gods direction in his word, and wait on til he who hath wounded, healagain, and he will make light arise in the midst of your darkness, the light of consolation in the darkness of perturbation, and calm the tempest that in your conscience.

Bes. There is no friend to that soul that is under Gods feed: I am under Gods feed: and my husband, children, nor any other are friends to me: nay, not my own self is a friend to my self:

ſelf: as for my corps, I care not it were caſt
to the heaven, and kepped upon iron grap
ſo my ſoul had peace.

Min. Beſſie, *many hath peace with themſel*
that hath none with God, as ſecure ſinners ſleep
in ſin, and crying peace; and ſome hath peace w
God that hath none with themſelves: and as m
have not the grace and faith, which they think t
have, ſo ſome have the grace and faith which
think they have not.

Beſ. I care not for mine own damnatio
God be glorified: what reck of me, if he get
own glory.

Min. Beſſie, *aſſure your ſelf theſe are not*
wiſhes and words of a caſtaway: and Gods
be dear to you, you and your ſalvation are de
him.

When I ſpeared if ſhe took meat to ref
her body, ſhe anſwered, No, all craves that,
faithful and unfaithful; albeit the unfaithfu
unworthy of it, for they cannot glorifie that
who gives it.

When I deſired her to pray, ſhe anſwere
have no warrand, and hath many lets. Wil
ſay, ſaid I, God be merciful to me for Jeſus ſ
ſhe ſaid God be merciful to me for thy
ſake, for Chriſt hath not redeemed all.
ſaid I, ye muſt ſeek in the Name of Jeſus w
the Father hath ſealed, in whom alone he
concealed with us, and for whoſe ſake he gi

ace and mercy; lay your count, you will ne-
er come to the Father but by him.

Min. Beſſie, *do ye not pray when ye are alone?* She anſwered, I will not commend my ſelf. When one parting with her, ſaid, God be with ou *Beſſie*, She anſwered, God forbid he were with you as he is with me. O there is a great change coming, a fearful alteration, a cup of wrath coming, we are conceived and born in ſin, and what ſhall be the end of ſin?

Min. [*Indeed Beſſie*, ſin hath fearful effects, But bleſſed be the Son of God, Jeſus, who ſaveth his people from their ſin,] there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt.

Beſ. I know if the devil were chained there beſide me, he cannot without Gods permiſſion hurt an hair of mine head: but God being angry with me, he turns him looſe, and all his inſtruments againſt me.

Min. Beſſie, [The Lord looſed him upon *Job*, but ſo many links only, that he wan to his goods, children, body, but not to his life, far leſs to his ſoul:] The Lord will not give the ſoul of his Turtle to the beaſt: the good Sheep-herd hath you in his hand, and none ſhall pluck you out of it: [whatever be your fears, doubtings, or apprehenſions under your tryal, and preſent deſertion.]

When ſome ſtanding by, ſpake to her, ſhe ſays,

ſays, take all that to your ſelf that you ſay
me, ye have no borrows, no aſſurance more
I, and knows not but ye may come in the
caſe.

Min. Indeed we ſhould take our war
by you, and we have all miſter to gather
lay up againſt the hour of temptation. I c
ing to her, ſays, *Beſſie*, Have ye gotten any e
fort yet? ſhe anſwered, When God ſends
will get it.

But ſeek ye it not, ſaid *I*? She anſwer
What availeth words, when there is not
within? When *I* was bleſſing the Lord,
doubled the word, and ſaid, Bleſſed be
bleſſed be he: O that *I* could glorifie h
O that I could get grips faſtened on him.
ſee *Beſſie*, ſaid I, albeit you pray not, yet
praiſe and bleſs God. I cannot, ſaid ſhe,
him, he is bleſſed in himſelf: and I
heard him blaſphemed. but I was grieved
I had rather have heard the evil ſpirit
ten times, nor him once blaſphemed.
them that cannot bleſs, and yet will blaſp
him.

When I earneſtly prayed for her, ſhe
Why take ye pains on ſuch a vile wretched
ture. I would *Beſſie*, ſaid I, have God gl
ing himſelf, in ſaving a loſt ſoul, and ma
ing his mercy on you who is miſerable. I
ſhe, that is right good, God grant it, God

t. O there is little faith in the earth! and love s grown cold.

When I desired her to pray, and said, long ince *Bessie* ye would have prayed, why insist ye not? She answered, I had the will of prayer, ut who hath the spirit of prayer, God knows: ell is the soul that is in Christ: but they that re founded on that old father *Adam*, fearful s their estate.

When I was posing her with some questions, bout her inward estate, she said, why examine ye me so sore, ye use sharp examination, and yet ye will not be my judge. *Bessie*, said I, I would know your constitution, that I may the better know how to deal with you; I am about to instruct and comfort you, to use the means, nd beg a blessing from God upon them, and I have seen when ye were better content that I conferred with you, and prayed for you; she nswered, It is a token that I get small comfort by them. *The Lord, said I*, Bessie, *hath that to give, he hath not concredited the dispensation of a dram weight of grace to man or Angels; he keepeth that in his own hand, and dispenses when, and to whom, and after what measure & manner he pleases. But I see the devil in your corruption, not content that the means be used.* She answered, I find the devil, the world and the flesh fighting against me. I feel both Satans assaults, and ly under Gods wrath also, which is a fearful case, what

ck of all Satans assaults, if I lay not under G
wrath.

Min. *The greater battel* Bessie, *the greater*
ctory. I see a great conflict in you, and you y
self find it as you confess; yet happy are ye who
pursued by Satan, and not possest by him, and u
peace with him. The Lord hath divided betw
you and him, and drawn you to that side whe
the seed of the woman is: I find faith fightin
you against unbelief, and where faith and unbe
are in one soul fighting, faith shall ever prevail.
faith is our victory, 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. *and what is*
condition of the Christian ever after his calling
to feel this troublesome conflict, between na
and Grace, Spirit and flesh, the old man and
new. But bleßed be God who shal tread Satan u
our feet; so albeit this battel be burthensome,
let this bear you up, that the Lord in end shall
you the victory over all your enemies. It were,
she, a great comfort to me; if I were persw
ed of it: but I cannot be quite of infidelity
dispair: Well is the soul that ever it came
the world, that can be freed of unbelief,
gets grace to believe: Lord banish the de
and I shall believe.

And some Gentlemen, and others being w
me, she directs her speech to them, saying
Gentlemen and simple, and all, let my cas
back be your forward coming; well are ye
can believe and pray, but I have none: I h

o wit in the world, either to bless God or be-
efit my self: many thousands get grace and
lth, and I would as fain have it as any of
hem.

Min. Bessie, *God measureth his own by their un-*
igned desire, and what you would be in an hearty
ffection, that ye are in the count of God: and that
ret seed of Grace, which in this exercise under
e askes of your corruptien lieth hid, and dead as
were, like seed in the ground, or hot coals under
hes shall hereafter in the mercy of God, bud and
eak forth: for it may be discerned already in these
ivine desires in your estimation of the blessedness
those that believe, and affection to be one of that
mber.

Min. Bessie, *Is there any comfort come yet?* she
swereth, if it were come, it would kyth, it
ould bud forth: Oft and many a time have you
d, comfort was coming, but I cannot find it:
s, I am an out law to God, I weep in the night
hen I should sleep, I mourn when others are
erry, I am bound when they are free, I have
ongsome lair, a fearful and sore lair here,
hen others go up and down, to and fro, I
n a wonder to the world, and I am worthy to
so.

Min. Bessie, [Long delay is not an argu-
ent of utter denyal, and where ye mourn,
where

where others are merry, it is better to g
the houſe of mourning nor of feaſting.]
ſed are they that mourn, *ſaith Chriſt*, but
to them that laugh. VVe are here in
vally of tears and kingdom of patience.
Lord will wipe the tears from your eyes ;
leading you by hell to heaven, and thr
many tribulations and afflictions to his K
dom, peace ſhall be the end of your Ba
and reſt the end of your trouble. VVe
Beſſie, brought you a drink of VVine to c
fort your ſpirit. VVine, ſaid ſhe, the w
water in the well is over good for me, I
have no VVine, why ſhould I have the bene
when it is neither bleſſed to me, neither
I bleſs him that gives it; I care not for out
bodily comforts, ſince *I* cannot get the in
and ſpiritual.

Min. [VVill ye ſeek it of God *Beſſie*, i
name of Jeſus,] Lord if thou wilt, ſaid
the Lord hath power enough, but not fi
faith in Jeſus, ſhe ſaid ſhe wanted a wa
to ſeek in his Name. Min. [*I* will ſhew
warrand *Beſſie*, his own command with a
miſe, *Pſal.* 50.15. In the day of thy trouble
1 *John* 2. 23. This is his Commandment
we believe, *&c.* Alſo he calleth, *Ma*
11. on the weary and laden, promiſing t
them, you cannot deny but you are both

nd weary under the load. Therefore you are alled on; and the more miſerable you are, ou are the meeter object for mercy to work n: will ye flee from the Saviour, becauſe you re loſt? or from the Phyſician, becauſe you re ſick?] Alace, ſaid ſhe, *I* cannot find a warand, *I* find a wrong warrand. [VVhat call you a wrong warrand, ſaid *I*?] *I* cannot find Chriſt, ſaid ſhe, and any thing beſide him is wrong.

Min. But ſay, Jeſus intercreed for me. *I* will not blaſphem him, ſaid ſhe, nor be a lyar, *I* am a lyar great enough already; for to me to ſpeak the words in my mouth without faith in my heart, what is that but to take his name in vain.

Min. *Shall I pray for you,* Beſſie?

VVhat good ſaid ſhe, can I get by your prayers, except *I* had a heart to pray my ſelf? *I* have many things to ſeek, if *I* could get faith to believe, and relief to my ſpirit, and what matter of ſawes then: when I ſee that I ſaw not then, ſhall *I* do that *I* did not? theſe three year *I* had not a faithful deſire, indeed *I* thoght it came all from your own mouth, all the inlack of my prayers.

Min. How so *Bessie*, what heard you me sa
That prayers availed not said she. *Min.* I ha
ofr complained of our prayers, as I had
cause, and that God might be angry agai
them. *Psal.* 81. 9. and might repel them if
dealt in justice with us, but this vvas not
make us leave off prayer, but to repent a
pray more fervently.

But the time hath been when you delighted
prayer, said *I*. She answered, *I* found comfort th
in prayer, *I* had no comfort but in prayer; *I* h
many calamities, and to whom should I seek b
to God, and oft went I to him with a griev
heart; had I God, what reck of all the wor
what reck who be against them, if he be wi
them, but if a soul be under Gods feed, wh
availeth friends, kin, jewels, and all the world:
and alas for ever, that I should want that bl
fing and favour which he bestows on so many
Alas, I have gotten the poor mans answer, y
will not be served.

Min. Take not that answer Bessie, *continue crying and knocking. for he hath said*, Seek and you sh
find: *and to that poor woman of Canaan. that wo
not take a repulse or nay-say, was satisfied in en*
But Iam none of his side, said she. Bessie. *said I; w
told you that? the devil would have you think s
and will ye take his testimony against you, who*

lier from the beginning, and not the witness of the rity and Word of God with you, believe not Sa- n nor your own false heart, I know God in his wn time will give you comfort.

Bes. The knowledge is yours said she, but the orrow is mine: well is the soul that getteth the oly Spirit to seek grace and mercy at his hands; ell is the soul that getteth the benefite and the essing with it: but fye on them that counts e sore afore the glory, the sore of the earth efore the glory of heaven, it is no sore to them ut a fearful curse. Alas I have long to live, and wretched life: *I* weary up and *I* weary down, ghs help not, sobs help not, groans help not, & ayer is faint: It is a fearful calamity to have oe here, and woe hereafter, to have hell here, d hell hereafter for ever: the matter is the s, they that gets a light life, a lightsome life, at they get woe hereafter, and a lightsome life the life that many hath: but it is most woful d doleful to have woe here, and woe hereaf- r for ever. I will tell you my testament, *I* have een in hell these many years, and *I* look ne- r for another heaven. O wretch that *I* am! as for ever, there is a great flie coming, a fear- l cup, and *I* will get my share of it, and it is thing *I* feel here, to that *I* fear for ever.

Min. Bessie, *The Lord corrects you here, that*

you

you periſh not with the world for ever: he wou
and he will heal again, albeit you can n
think it, nor feel it, nor hope for it, yet
name I will aſſure you in his own time he wi
you, and ſpeak peace to you. I cannot, ſai
find you a good ſpay-man.

Min. Yet if ever, *Beſſie*, I ſpoke truth, yo
find it: I promiſe you in the name of the
She anſwered, the Lords Lieutenant w
loath to lye: well is his Lieutenent. W
call you, ſaid I, his Lieutenant: You, ſaid
ſuch as you, ye are Tenants, and no
ſters.

Min. Beſſie, grip to the promiſe of mercy
above hope. I have not ſaid ſhe, that gift
ſelf, if God give me it not. Seek it of God,
What reck of words, ſaid ſhe, ſince I cann
mends to my inward parts. I am ſure ſa
you ſhould go to hell, *Beſſie*, you will go t
with love to God. She anſwered, what reck
love to him, ſince he hath none to me
he had love to me all were well.

Min. But he loves you *Beſſie*, beſo
you loved him, for your love is the ef
his, and they whom he loveth can nev
riſh. His own, ſaid ſhe, ſhall never p
Min. But ye are one of thoſe *Beſſie*, an

nt to the promiſe. She anſwered, How
ll I believe you who believes not him who
h all power, and is truth it ſelf? I would
n ſeek God, but I feel my ſtops and
, and my prayers are dung back. If any
d but four and twenty hours, yea a touch
hat, under which I have lyen theſe three
rs, they would think their caſe fearful,
d would give a world (if they had it)
a blink of his reconciled face. But
calamity will make others run and cry
mercy, my grief and diſpleaſure is your
and gladneſſe. How ſo (*Beſſie*) we
e no pleaſure in your grief. She anſwer.
, a Chriſtian that is ſealed ſeeing me,
ll flee to mercy as a bird, but I want wings.

After I had prayed for her, ſhe ſaid, if
od would give me a heart to give you
nks for your good prayers, I would give
: and if I had a motion in the right way
ſalvation, O as I ſhould run and flee to
n like a bird! God be bleſſed ſaid I, I
ſome fore-running token of his coming
th comfort. She anſwered, They are
t ſober and ſmall tokens. Your words
ſaid I) ſmell ſometimes of the Spirit of
ce and faith, and ſometimes of the fleſh,
delity and infirmity; for the prayers of
e Saints are oft like a fire, which at the firſt
th ſmoke and reek, without light or hea;
t breaketh out ere all be done into a clear
ht, and comfortable heat; as may be ſeen

in ſundry of Davids Pſalms, where he be
with heavy plaints, and endeth in heav
praiſes and prayers ere all be done.

At another time, I asked, if any com
was yet come? She anſwered, Dolor
come, but no comfort. You are troub
with me in Pulpit, and out of Pulpit,
in coming unto me day after day: will
make you quite of this cumber. *Beſſie (*
I) I think no cumber of it, it is the duty of
calling, and would God you got comfor
it. But how ſhall I free my ſelf of it?
anſwered, Cut me off. And where
(ſaid I) would ye have me, or any,
ing your blood upon us, and ſin on
ſouls. Nay, no ſin, ſaid ſhe, for there
good cauſe. What cauſe? ſaid I, W
have you done deſerving death? Is not
belief ſaid ſhe, the greateſt ſin in the wo
and I am guilty of it. We have ſaid I,
warrand for that: again, you are not v
of faith, however in your wreſtling with
belief, you think ſo, and you would fain
lieve, and be freed from unbelief, that
might ſay with the Apoſtle, *It is not*
but ſin in you. You are a ſufferer in thi
gainſt your will, you are ſpiritually opp
led, and groans to God under this bond
Then ſhe uttereth theſe words, O th
could get this fountain of faith, a ſtern of
O as grace would grow! O for a bleſ
blink of the favourable face of the Father

faithful! O to win to that holy fountain! now he is ready to give, if I were ready to eive and seek: Glory pertaineth to him, glorified shall he be.

pray you *Bessie* seek on, and glorifie him incalling of his Name: Pray him in Jesus me, to be merciful to you, and help your elief. *I* can (said she) name Jesus; he will not be pleased with words, ex- t I had warrant by faith in my heart to k by.

M. Yet will you say the words, I think re is none but you, but they will do this ch for me. Many speaks them (said she) h little faith, but I dar not that I draw down his punishments,

M. *Bessie*, He will never be angry that pray him to glorifie himself, in giving an rt to believe in him. I have great lets, she. M. But pray him to take them a- . Think you (said she) that be to do le now? *M.* But continue and let me you, and be a witnesse to it: do this for pleasure. It were my pleasure and good d she) if *I* could do it rightly, it were my well: But God hath a work to work with that you never saw the like of it. *Bessie*, God in Jesus, that it may be a work of cy, to his glory and your salvation. She vered, I will tell you my mind Jesus is a One without exception, not like the false

flesh of this generation, he will lose no
his own: And though they fall fearfu
will raise them them again: but those th
bids not of, he gives them no grace to
him, whereof I am one, I can name him,
speake any words as you hear; my m
should be opened to seek, if my heart
opened to believe, but it is closed; I
mourn for it, but I cannot mend it, but
mend it: Lord mend it, Seek (said I
Christs sake, I want faith (said she) I
the sin of man is not so great, but Gods
is greater to forgive it, where they can re
and believe. But I have not this grace o
self, if God give it not: Pray that ye m
preserved from the peril and plague that
come on me, Well are them that are gro
on Christ, well is them that are brethren
sisters to him. O that I were one of th
O that those that are come out of my loins
seek to him, and blesse him! O tha
Grace-giver would give me grace to believe
give him glory and I should blesse him, and
him thanks and praise, and honour and
for ever. O that I could get an heart to
him thanks for any thing he sends. Why s
not I be content with his will? O that I
welcome his send, how bitter soever, and
reuce the sender! What reck of me if h
his own glory: but alace! I have many w
many woes, wangrace, wanchance, no we
I am surely shaken, a sore shake of wrath is
on my soul.

M. He ſhakes you (*Beſſie*) to make you ſure, If it were ſo (ſaid ſhe) I would ſeek to him. The tentation (ſaid I) dings you from that you deſire, and you are greatly wounded in your ſpiritual battle: but what reck of a wound to him that getteth the victory, you will in the Lords mercy get the victory, what reck of your wounds then; And we will ſit down on our knees, and crave it to you of God in the Name of Jeſus. After I had prayed (ſhe ſaith) God for thy beloved Son Jeſus ſake, ſee to my miſter, ſuccour me. Now ye are witneſſe to that, that ye would have had that I ſeek in Jeſus Name. Bleſſed be God, for it is ſaid, Seek on, and I will pledge my ſoul for yours, that ye ſhall be ſafe. Seek muſt I (ſaid ſhe) and ſeek will I though he ſhould ding me back to the bottom of the ſea: and charge the whole family that they do the like, as you do to me: for come well, come wo, they will get a ſhare of it: I will (ſaid I) for they ought to concur with you.

The next time that I viſited her, and demanded how ſhe did? She anſwered, The life of the body is not like to go out, and comfort is not like to come into the ſoul. Yet wait, *Beſſie*, in hope, and give not over, it will come. I know (ſaid ſhe) your tales and tidings, but cannot find them true: Alace, that ever I came into the world, I am not booked, I am not baptized, I am not written in the book of life, I am not baptized with the right bap-

tism, I cannot find the fruit of it. M. *Bessie* (said I) I am sorry that I find you not as I left you. Continued you not calling on God in Christs Name, as you promised? She answered, I was the worse of the words that you caused me to say; I am ever since a thousand times more troubled then before. *Bessie*, the words have not the wite, it is satan that rageth before he be cast out: and your trouble the nearer the hight, the nearer is the delivery; and although your Physick be bitter, yet it will have good effect. No trouble is joyous or pleasant for the present, &c. *Heb.* 12. The Lord who will not let the hand of the wicked ly long upon the back of the righteous, *Psal.* 125. 3. will not let his own hand, which is heavier then he hand of the wicked, ly long: he will send the issue with the tentation, 1. *Cor.* 10. 13. Wherefore hearken not (*Bessie*) to satans suggestions, that your heart be not bound up that you pray not. That is (said she) a true tale, satan binds up my heart. But pray (said I) against it: say the Lords Prayer. I can (said she) say the words, but I have no warrand to pray it. I cannot call him Father: he is the Father of the faithful alone: but that privilledge of children is not given me; I cannot find a warrand that I am his: alace, that ever I was the cursed ground whereon the ill seed was sown. M. *Bessie*, the more miserable you find your self, the more meet are you to go to the Saviour for mercy. I am not (said she) worthy that he should give me any grace or mercy.

M.

M. Bessie, none is worthy : and if he gave to the worthy, his glory and praise would be the lesse : but in this it his mercy magnified, that he manifesteth it unto the miserable: and this a fault in us, that we are ever seeking something in our selves which would derogat from the praise of his grace, as presumption and desperation are dangerous rocks that many run on : and this is a third, and as dangerous as any of them, and the rather, that it is not soon seen or taken up, we are ay seeking something in our selves that should commend us to God, as if we could not be saved, except we were perfect; as if our own innocency, and not Gods mercy in Christs merits, were the warrand of our salvation.

B. *I* cannot speak the word can please you, do not them that came out of my bowels; how then can it please the Lord? Mine own hand and satan lets me not believe, and my unbelief draweth down all the ill of the world, and you book me , and carries my name in many parts, but I cannot mend it.

M. *Bessie* nothing to your prejudice carry your name; for why should not the Saints know of your estate? I pray you, tell me, said she, how the people think of me, whether they be blyth or wo, ? *I* will assure you *Bessie*, Gods people mourns with you, and bears a part of your burden: as for my self, I have five children sick of the fever, God who knows

knows my heart, is my witneſſe, that I wo
not ſo fain have them raiſed up in their bod
as you comforted in ſpirit. You know yo
warraud, ſaid ſhe.

M. I look to that; I ſeek mercy. But, ſ
ſhe, if I had ſpiritual grace, and could, I wo
give you a reward. Will ever that day da
that God will draw me a wandring ſheep ho
to himſelf?

M. *Beſſie*, in Gods mercy, I am aſſured
it. The God, ſaid ſhe, who made hea
and earth, who hath all power, grant it in m
cy: Well is them for ever finds his favour,
wo to them that feels his feed: had I ho
it would mitigate my ſorrow. *Beſſie*, ſa
the Lord who by his ſecret grace underprops
ſuſtains you now, will in his own time b
ſenſible grace, and by his felt preſence ab
dantly comfort your ſoul in ſuch ſort, that
weight and grievouſneſſe of the temptation
trouble, and delay of time, ſhall be reco
penſed with unſpeakable joy; that you y
ſelf ſhall confeſſe the one light, in regard
the other, not to be worthy of it: as by t
contrarie he recompenſeth the delay of jud
ment toward the wicked, with the hea
weight of wrath. Happie, ſaid ſhe, are t
who ſuffer for Chriſts ſake, for righteouſne
ſake, they will be comforted now and th
but they that ſuffer for ſin, without ſenſe of
favour, comfortleſſe in their condition.
one go through the earth, up and down, to
fr

, where will they find a wearied wight till
y come to me? And you that hear me,
h the pith of prayer that I can, I ask of
d that you never know the way that I am
: it is lack of faith that is my losse, want of
h is my wrack,, I lyunder fearful weights,
d want of faith to get the remission of them.
m fallen without a resurrection. My judge
my partie. I have no claim to his mercy.
have no ground of faith to fasten grips on
m. *I* find not a spark of light, and I find no
it of your prayers, albeit I hear them. No
hristian should come near me.

M. Bessie, the Lord will oft, for good causes,
lert his deareſt Saints, and withdraw him-
lf from their sight and sense of their humilia-
on and instruction (that they count not
ace natural) for their greater consolation
hen he cometh again, and for your provoca-
on: follow after him when he withdraweth
s grace, and yet it is not real, but a suppos-
d desertion: wherefore seek his sensible pre-
nce, and break through all Impediments of
errors, blindnesse and unbelief; or what else,
hrimble through all, and he shall come leap-
g over the mountains of your sins, and hills
f wrath, with the voice of heavenlie conso-
tion.

B. Shall I seek hot water under cold yee? I
have not come in the precise and blessed hour
f grace I am come behind: and where you
ill me to pray, wherefore serves the prayer
hat glorifieth not God?

M. Bessie, it is yet the acceptable t
and he who is found of them that seek him
will much more reveal himself to him
seeketh. And as so prayer, by it you g
ly glorifie God; for you acknowledge
misery and necessity, and that he is God:
not only knows your misery and necessity,
is both willing and able to help the same:
we have not only his command to pray, but
so his promise to be heard.

B. Then all break his command,
chiefly I, and so will be seen on the wh
swack.

After this, when I had read some com
able places to her, and prayed for her, she
ed our, and doubled it oft, O blessed are t
that have that spirit of prayer! O blessed
ther.

NOw as for the end of this Conflict, a
death of this dear daughter of Abraham
April 1625. I being at Glasgow at the Provi
cial Assembly, the Lord called her home, s
being greatly extenuat and worn, what by hea
vie sickneſſe on her body, what by this long
some and fearful exercise on her soul, death o
a suddenty dealt with her heart, that h
words and speech failed her: but in presen
of divers witnesses her hands and eyes wer
heaved to the heavens, and so giving that sig
of victorie she rendered her spirit. And a
though it pleased our gracious God (who
his great wisdom worketh after diverse sort
wit

with his own) to let us hear of her own mouth
of the glorious victory, and unspeakable joyes
that he had given her inwardly in her soul: yet
am sure there is none that is illuminat from
bove, and taught to discern spiritually, that
will any way doubt of her blessed deliverance,
albeit no outward sign had been seen. Yea, it
as a wonderful mercy, that God, so long un-
er such horrors, held her hand out of her
lf: which at last with her eyes she lifted up
the heavens, when her speech could not ex-
resse her inward feeling of an unspeakable joy,
d victorious faith.

Only herein we have our warning to be wise
time, and to get oyl in our lamps, and not to
ease our selves with empty lamps, and with
are show of an outward profession; but la-
r to have a lively and effectual faith in this
epth of our souls: for conceit of opinion will
em sufficient, till we be put at, which will
t do our turn, nor stand us in stead in the
ry tryal.

FINIS.